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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifth special session
17-18 October 2000

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Prepared by the Secretary-General

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1990/48 of 25 May 1990, authorized the Commission on Human Rights to meet exceptionally between its regular sessions, provided that a majority of States members of the Commission so agreed.

2. On 3 October 2000, the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed a letter to the High Commissioner for Human Rights requesting her to convene a special session of the Commission on Human Rights (see E/CN.4/S-5/2).

3. On 4 October 2000, pursuant to decision 1993/286 of 28 July 1993 of the Economic and Social Council, which established the procedure for convening special sessions of the Commission on Human Rights, the members of the Commission were requested to indicate their wishes in regard to this request, with a view to ascertaining whether the majority of the members agreed to the holding of a special session. By the prescribed deadline, the following members of the Commission on Human Rights have indicated agreement: Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, Venezuela and Zambia.

4. In the light of the agreement of the majority of its members, the Commission on Human Rights will be convened in its fifth special session on Tuesday, 17 October 2000, at 10.00 a.m. at the United Nations Office at Geneva in Conference Room XVII.

5. It will be recalled that at its fifty-sixth session the Commission elected the following officers, who will constitute the Bureau for the fifth special session:

Chairperson:	Mr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada (Nepal)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Mr. Ibrahim Mirghani Ibrahim (Sudan) Mr. Krzysztof Jakubowski (Poland) Mr. Víctor Rodríguez Cedeño (Venezuela)
Rapporteur:	Ms. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire (Canada)

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Commission will have before it the provisional agenda (E/CN.4/S-5/1) prepared by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 5 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the present annotations relating to the items included in the provisional agenda.

Item 2. Organization of work

7. In accordance with normal practice, the Commission will consider the organization of its work at its 1st meeting. It may be recalled that at its fourth special session, the Commission accepted the recommendation of its Bureau regarding the limitation of the frequency and duration of statements. Members of the Commission, and all observers were limited to one statement of 10 minutes. It was also agreed that, in the case of joint statements by States or non-governmental organizations, more time, within reasonable limits, would be given to the speakers. If, after a collective statement exceeding 10 minutes, some States wished to take the floor again, they would be given half the time normally accorded.

8. The Commission also accepted the recommendation that, with regard to rights of reply, a limitation of two replies, the first of five minutes and the second of three minutes, at the end of the day or at the end of the general debate on any particular item(s), would be observed.

9. The Commission followed the practice, established at its previous special sessions, whereby the requirement stipulated in rule 52 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council that proposals and substantive amendments be discussed or put to the vote no earlier than 24 hours after copies had been circulated to all members was waived.

Composition of the Commission

10. The composition of the Commission for 2000 is the following (the term of membership of each State expires on 31 December of the year indicated in brackets): Argentina (2002), Bangladesh (2000), Bhutan (2000), Botswana (2000), Brazil (2002), Burundi (2002), Canada (2000), Chile (2000), China (2002), Colombia (2001), Congo (2000), Cuba (2000), Czech Republic (2002), Ecuador (2002), El Salvador (2000), France (2001), Germany (2002), Guatemala (2000), India (2000), Indonesia (2002), Italy (2002), Japan (2002), Latvia (2001), Liberia (2001), Luxembourg (2000), Madagascar (2001), Mauritius (2001), Mexico (2001), Morocco (2000), Nepal (2000), Niger (2001), Nigeria (2002), Norway (2001), Pakistan (2001), Peru (2000), Philippines (2000), Poland (2000), Portugal (2002), Qatar (2001), Republic of Korea (2001), Romania (2001), Russian Federation (2000), Rwanda (2000), Senegal (2000), Spain (2002), Sri Lanka (2000), Sudan (2000), Swaziland (2002), Tunisia (2000), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2000), United States of America (2001), Venezuela (2000), Zambia (2002)

Item 3. Letter dated 3 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressed to the High Commissioner for Human Rights

11. This letter, on the basis of which the present session is convened, is circulated as document E/CN.4/S-5/2.

Item 4. Report to the Economic and Social Council on the fifth special session

12. Rule 37 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council provides that the Commission shall submit to the Council a report, which shall normally not exceed 32 pages, on the work of each session, containing a concise summary of recommendations and a statement of issues requiring action by the Council. It shall, as far as practicable, frame its recommendations and resolutions in the form of drafts for approval by the Council.

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